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## Draft Business Cases for eGovernment Enabling Initiatives Now Complete

Part of the Smart Choices outlined in USDA's eGovernment Strategic Plan, eDeployment, eAuthentication and eLearning are three initiatives on which USDA has been initially concentrating its efforts. These initiatives will provide a technological foundation for the Department and its agencies to adopt eGovernment; as such, they are generally referred to as the eGovernment Enablers.

Initial business cases were created for each of the Enablers, as well as all eGovernment Smart Choices, last spring; these business cases all were approved by the Executive Information Technology Investment Review Board (EITIRB) in July. After receiving this approval, and in accord with IT Capital Planning and Investment Control guidelines, the eGovernment team set out to create more in-depth, comprehensive business cases for the Enablers, adding detail such as specific requirements, telecommunications and security plans, and technical architectures.

To accomplish this, USDA's agencies used a collaborative process, working to ensure that each initiative would be useful and appropriate for the entire Department. Indeed, over 100 individuals representing every agency worked tirelessly on these cases to ensure completion prior to year-end.

Drafts of the three Enablers' business cases have been successfully completed and are currently being reviewed by the eGovernment Executive Council, eGovernment Working Group, agency CIOs, and the USDA CIO. With the specific direction and solution for each initiative now established, and a thorough draft business case developed, the three Enablers will be reviewed again by the EITIRB in February for its approval before implementation begins.

Once they are approved, the Enablers will begin vendor assessment and selection and related activities. This in turn will be followed by a phased implementation approach, starting with a handful of agencies selected based on agency need and readiness to be early adopters. Implementation will then expand to other agencies and offices, continuing through FY 2007.

### *eDeployment*

Have you ever been frustrated looking for data on USDA Web sites, finding only outdated information or nothing at all? Or have you ever searched for a document or record, but found that it has been misplaced or filed in an inaccessible location?

eDeployment—encompassing five previously separate enabling eGovernment initiatives, namely Web Content Management, Document Management, Web Presence, Portal Services, and Data Management—will begin to solve these problems and others. It will replace inconsistent and un-integrated systems with a flexible, modern set of tools available to all agencies and staff offices. These tools will provide financial benefits to the enterprise, including volume discounts and reduced operations costs. Further, the capabilities provided through this initiative will provide significant productivity benefits for both the public and employees, including improved access to information and time saved locating, working with, and publishing various types of data.

### *eLearning*

With the hassle and expense of travel and the difficulty of finding time for scheduled, classroom-based training, government and private industry are turning to eLearning to provide flexible alternatives such as self-paced online courses. Further, the need to quickly roll out training in support of the Farm Bill, as well as Homeland Security and the Agricultural Risk Protection Act, highlight the rapidly increasing training demands USDA is facing. To meet these demands, USDA's eLearning initiative will develop standards for online courses and launch an enterprise learning management system to help employees, managers, and trainers manage training needs.

This solution will provide a number of benefits. Employees will be able to better discover and select training appropriate to their needs, and both employees and managers will be able to more easily request and issue approvals, create training plans, and track requirements. By allowing staff to choose from a variety of options, including virtual classrooms, self-paced online courses, and traditional methods, eLearning will enable the workforce to choose the training methods that best suit individual schedules, learning styles, and other preferences. Finally, USDA will reduce its costs by leveraging government-wide shared courses from the eTraining Presidential Initiative.

### *eAuthentication*

We've all been there—trying to log on to a Web site, unable to remember which of our 15 user names and passwords are for *this* particular site, and we've also worried about giving out our credit card numbers to a call center or online this holiday season. And many at USDA have spent long hours worrying about eGovernment security solutions, trying to figure out esoteric terms like PKI.

eAuthentication (the ability to validate that a user is actually the person with whom a system is communicating or conducting a transaction) will provide solutions to these problems, as well as provide additional benefits for employees and citizens. A single sign-on will mean our customers only have to remember one user name and password to access all USDA systems, saving time spent calling help desks and resetting passwords. And with eSignatures, citizens will finally be able to take advantage of truly paperless transactions for even the most sensitive subjects (such as loans and other payments).

Moreover, the eAuthentication solution is critical to our compliance with the Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA), Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce (ESIGN) Act, and other security and eGovernment requirements.

### eGovernment in Motion

eGovernment Executive Council member Kevin Shea and eGovernment liaison Shannon Hamm, both representing the Marketing and Regulatory Programs mission area, and Mike Gregoire, APHIS CIO and eGovernment Working Group member, pose with an eGovernment billboard on display at APHIS' Riverdale offices.



### OCIO Develops Integrated eGovernment Reporting Process and Scorecard

With the advent of eGovernment and the President's Management Agenda (PMA), and an increased emphasis on enterprise solutions, alignment of Departmental and agency planning and budgeting efforts has never been more important. To ensure Department-wide coordination of eGovernment activities and support coordination of eGovernment-related functions within agencies, OCIO has developed an Integrated eGovernment Reporting process, as well as a complementary Integrated eGovernment Scorecard.

By linking several previously separate reporting processes, the new process will provide a clearer picture of agencies' eGovernment progress and ensure that their contributions are accurately reflected in required eGovernment reporting to the Deputy Secretary, OMB, GAO, and others. Further, by eliminating multiple, somewhat redundant, reporting processes with multiple deadlines, the integrated process will greatly reduce agencies' reporting burden.

The new report will consist of three major components:

- Updates to agency eGovernment Tactical Plans;
- GPEA compliance project plans that describe key milestones of current/planned initiatives to offer electronic options; and

- Completion of spreadsheets that contain key GPEA and eAuthentication information.

Based on the information provided in the Integrated eGovernment Reporting Process, the eGovernment Team will issue an Integrated eGovernment Scorecard measuring all facets of agencies' participation in and contributions to the Department's collective efforts to achieve an overall 'green' rating on the eGovernment component of the PMA. A memorandum providing further details on the new scorecard will be circulated soon.

### eTraining Presidential eGovernment Initiative Offers eLearning Services to Federal Workforce

eTraining, one of the 24 government-wide Presidential eGovernment Initiatives designed to better serve citizens and save taxpayer dollars, has officially launched [www.goLearn.gov](http://www.goLearn.gov), a site that now provides an array of eLearning services across the Federal workforce. The site, launched in July after nearly a year of planning, now offers thousands of courses in a variety of subjects. Initially, the site's content focuses on core skills applicable throughout government; however, as additional content is added, more function-specific courses (on subjects such as forestry and nutrition) will be available.

Response to [goLearn.gov](http://goLearn.gov) has been extremely positive. Over one million of the site's pages are viewed every month, and more than 50,000 users have taken courses already. Courses on technology and security have proven especially popular, especially a set of five IT and computer security courses available to USDA employees at no cost.

In addition to the content currently available, the site is planning a number of enhancements. In early 2003, limited learning management tools will be available to managers and employees, including transcripts of past courses taken and lists of courses planned and in progress. Later in the year, the site will add additional learning management tools, including individual development plans.

[goLearn.gov](http://goLearn.gov) will provide a number of benefits to USDA as the Department develops its own eLearning initiatives. USDA eLearning will be integrated with [goLearn.gov](http://goLearn.gov) to the maximum extent possible, including both incorporating its content on technology, civil rights, ethics, and other subjects applicable across government, as well as potentially using its learning management tools. Leveraging [goLearn.gov](http://goLearn.gov) will allow USDA to minimize the cost of our learning initiatives and ensure a wide range of courses.

For more information on USDA's participation in the initiative, contact the eGovernment Team.

**For more information on any of these topics, or for general comments or questions, contact the eGovernment Team at:**

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